

My Ancestor Went to British East India

Tithe and valuation records are some of the most valuable records in Ireland, especially with the loss of most of the 19th Century census records.

Objectives

You will be able to:

- 1- Learn more about why people went to British East India.
- 2- Learn what records exist.
- 3- Know how to access the records.

Why would my ancestor go to British East India?

- To participate in the British East India Trading Company.
- To serve in the military operated by the East India Trading Company before 1858 in one of the three main presidencies: Bengal, Bombay, Madras.
- To serve in the military under the British Crown from 1858 onward.

East India Company

The Honorable East India Company (HEIC) was set up in 1600 to establish trade between Britain and India. They set up their first factory in India in 1619. In 1661 the British gained Bombay from the Portuguese. In 1784 the East India Company was brought under direct control of the British government. Each of the presidencies established and maintained their own independent military armies. The administration of India still remained in the hands of the directors of the East India Company until 1858 when it was abolished, and the British Crown took control naming Queen Victoria Empress of India.

Presidencies:

- **Bombay:**
 - Established as the capital. It was the main military garrison and center of political control.
 - Covered much of western and central India and parts of Pakistan and the Arabian Peninsula.
- **Bengal:**
 - Fort William in Calcutta established as the capital and served as the main military garrison and center of political control.
 - Covered northwest India, Burma, Singapore, and Penang, Malaysia.
- **Madras:**
 - Fort St. George was established as the capital and served as the main military garrison and center of political control.
 - Covered the southern half of India and Ceylon, now modern-day Sri Lanka.

What types of records may exist for ancestors in British East India?

- Births and baptisms
- Marriages
- Death and burials
- Probate
- Service and other military records
- History of military regiments
- Cemetery records
- Directories
- Newspapers
- Personal papers
- Biographies
- Pensions
- Employee records
- Merchant marine records

How to access the British East India Company records?

There are some great websites for accessing records for your British East India ancestor:

<http://www.familysearch.org> – Free access

- Births and baptisms
- Death and burials
- Marriages
- Probate records
- Digital books on East India families
- Army lists and service records
- Navy records
- Merchant Marine records
- And more...

<https://www.fibis.org> – Free access

- Births, marriages, deaths
- Cemetery records
- Military records
- Probate records
- Directories
- Newspapers
- Personal papers
- Regiment histories
- A wiki containing knowledge articles
- And more...

<https://www.findmypast.com> – Subscription site

- Births and baptisms
- Deaths and burials
- Marriages
- Army & Navy pensions
- Wills and probates
- Directories
- And more...

<https://ancestry.com> – Subscription site

- Births and baptisms
- Deaths and burials
- Marriages
- UK, Registers of employees of the East India Company and India Office
- UK, Roll of the Indian Medical Service
- And more...

<https://www.bl.uk/> – British Library

- India Office Records – Contains a wealth of information on those who went to India.
- Births, baptisms, marriages, deaths, burials, biographical notes.

Steps to accessing records for British East India:

FamilySearch	Fibis	Findmypast	Ancestry	British Library
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. From the homepage click "Search," then "Catalog."2. In the Places search type, "India."3. You can also do a Keyword search for "British East India," or "British India."	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. From the homepage go to "Research Your Ancestors."2. Click 'Search Database.'3. In addition, you can access the fibiwiki, gallery, and library	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Go to Search.2. Click All record sets.3. In the search box type "India".	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. From the homepage go to "Search," then "Card Catalog."2. In the Keyword search type "India."	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. From the homepage click "Search the main Catalogue."2. Click "Catalogues" at the top. In the far-right corner under Other Catalogues, click "India Family History."3. Type in a surname.

Additional Information

To learn more about British East India visit the following sites:

- wiki.fibis.org/w/Main_Page > A wiki designed for information on British East India.
- wiki.familysearch.org > in the search box type "British East India."
- www.nationalarchives.gov.uk > type in the search box 'British East India.'
- India and the British
https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/india/india_british.htm
- British Library - <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/india-office-records-family-history>